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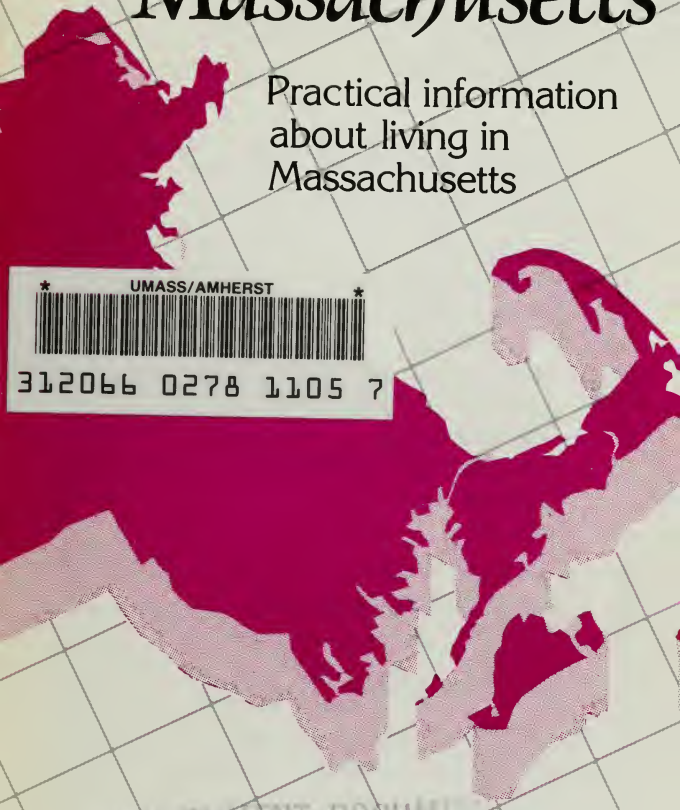
Welcome to Massachusetts

Practical information about living in Massachusetts



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Michael J. Connolly
Massachusetts
Secretary of State

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Massachusetts,

located in the heart of New England, is the region's most populous state. Lively urban areas, picturesque seaside communities, and tiny rural towns offer a unique ambiance which each year attracts many new residents to Massachusetts. This pamphlet is designed to provide people contemplating a move to Massachusetts and those who have recently come here with specific information on the practical aspects of residency in Massachusetts.

RESIDENCY

There is no formal procedure for establishing a legal residence in Massachusetts. Voter registration, automobile registration, a driver's license, the appearance of a person's name on a city or town street list, and rent, utility, mortgage or telephone bills normally provide tangible proof of residence. However, individual public or private agencies or institutions may have their own requirements for proof of residence.

VOTER REGISTRATION

If you are a United States citizen, a Massachusetts resident, and you will be 18 years old on or before election day, you may register to vote in Massachusetts at your city or town hall as soon as you have established an address in the state. Registration in Massachusetts is permanent. You must register again only if you move or change your name.

AUTOMOBILES

Registration Massachusetts residents are required to register their cars. You may register your automobile at any local office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. You will need to present proof of ownership, either the title for your car or, if you come from a state which does not require titles, a bill of sale or a past registration. Before you can register your car, you will also need insurance certification issued by a licensed Massachusetts insurance company indicating that your car is insured in accordance with Massachusetts laws. Registration costs $24 for two years.

Inspection Within seven days after registering your car in Massachusetts, you must have it inspected at any gas station or automobile repair shop which has been certified by the Registry of Motor Vehicles as an official inspection station.

On April 1, 1983 a new inspection maintenance program requiring both a yearly safety and emissions level inspection of motor vehicles went into effect. Motor vehicles that are more than 15 years old, that have a maximum speed of 25 m.p.h. or less, that have a diesel engine, that have a registered weight of 10,000 pounds or more, are motorcycles or are new vehicles being registered for the first time are exempt from the emissions part of the inspection.

A combined emissions and safety inspection costs $10. The safety only inspection for exempt vehicles costs $4.

Sales Tax If you move into Massachusetts within six months of purchasing a new or used car, you must pay either the full sales tax on the car or the difference between the Massachusetts sales tax and that of the state where the car was purchased. More specifically:

a. If Massachusetts has reciprocity with the state and you have proof that the sales tax was paid in that state, you have only to pay the difference between the tax rates of the two states.
b. If Massachusetts does not have reciprocity with the state where the car was purchased, then you must pay the full Massachusetts sales tax.

No sales tax has to be paid if the car was purchased more than six months prior to your move.

Driver's License To obtain a Massachusetts driver's license, you will not be required to take a driving test or a written examination if you have a valid license from any state in the United States or province of Canada. At a branch office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles, you may fill out an application form and take an eye test. If you pass the eye test, a photo license will be issued. It costs $30 and is valid for four years.

For more information, contact:

Registry of Motor Vehicles
100 Nashua Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 727-3794

TAX STRUCTURE

The following taxes will most directly affect you:

Personal Income Tax A 5 percent tax plus a 7.5 percent surtax (effective rate 5.375 percent) on earned income from such sources as wages and salaries, Massachusetts savings deposit interest, profit or loss from a business or profession, taxable pensions and annuities, rents and royalty income, and winnings and prizes. A 10 percent tax rate plus a 7.5 percent surtax (effective rate 10.75 percent) on unearned income such as dividends, interest (other than Massachusetts saving deposit interest), and capital gains.

Sales and Use Tax A 5 percent tax on the retail sale of all items unless exempted by statute. A 5 percent tax on tangible personal property which is used or stored in Massachusetts and upon which a sales tax has not been paid. Exemptions include food, clothing up to a value of $175, fuel for heating, newspapers, and prescription drugs.

Sales Tax on Meals A 5 percent tax on restaurant and take-out meals.

Gasoline Tax A tax of 10 percent on the wholesale price per gallon with a floor of 11 cents per gallon.

Cigarette Tax A tax of 26 cents on a package of twenty.

Alcoholic Beverages Tax A tax on alcoholic beverages based on alcoholic content.

Automobile Excise Tax An annual tax levied by the state but collected at the local level, at the rate of $25 per thousand dollars of the car's value. The value is based on the manufacturer's list price (without options) in the year of manufacture and the tax is figured according to a percentage of the list price. The percentages are as follows:

Year preceding the designated year of manufacture	50%
Year of manufacture	90%
Second year	60%
Third year	40%
Fourth year	25%
Fifth and subsequent years	10%

Estate Tax The tax is levied on the value of the Massachusetts gross estate less exemptions and deductions. The exemption is $30,000 (but may be as much as $60,000 in certain cases). Deductions include funeral expenses, claims against the estate, administration expenses, and the marital and charitable deductions. See box below:

If the Massachusetts taxable estate is:

Over	But not over
0	50,000
50,000	100,000
100,000	200,000
200,000	400,000
400,000	600,000
600,000	800,000
800,000	1,000,000
1,000,000	2,000,000
2,000,000	4,000,000
4,000,000	—

For more information on taxes, contact:

Department of Revenue
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02204
(617) 727-4256
(617) 727-4545

LICENSES/PERMITS

Marriage The legal age to marry in Massachusetts is 18. All people who marry in the state must have a marriage license issued in Massachusetts by any city or town clerk.

Fishing/Hunting State licenses are required for all persons, age 15 or over, to hunt or fish in any inland waters. Licenses are issued by a city or town clerk or the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

For more information, contact:

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Recreational Vehicles
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02202
(617) 727-3151

The Massachusetts estate tax shall be:

5% of the taxable estate

$ 2,500	+ 7%	of the excess over $	50,000
$ 6,000	+ 9%	of the excess over $	100,000
$ 15,000	+ 10%	of the excess over $	200,000
$ 35,000	+ 11%	of the excess over $	400,000
$ 57,000	+ 12%	of the excess over $	600,000
$ 81,000	+ 13%	of the excess over $	800,000
$107,000	+ 14%	of the excess over	$1,000,000
$247,000	+ 15%	of the excess over	$2,000,000
$547,000	+ 16%	of the excess over	$4,000,000

Boats/Recreational Vehicles All boats with engines and other recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles and trailbikes must be registered with the Division of Marine and Recreational Vehicles. This can be done either at one of the regional offices or in the Boston office.

For more information, contact:

Division of Marine and Recreational Vehicles
Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and
Recreational Vehicles
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02202
(617) 727-3900

Drinking Age The legal drinking age in Massachusetts is 20. Proper identification is either a Massachusetts driver's license or a liquor purchase identification card issued by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Guns Gun and firearm permits are issued by local police departments. There are three basic types of permits: a firearm identification card (F.I.D.), a license to carry, and a license to purchase. A F.I.D. card covers rifles and shotguns which can be transported anywhere and pistols which must be kept in one place. A license to carry covers pistols, rifles, and shotguns, all of which may be transported anywhere. A license to purchase covers handguns which must be kept in one place. No person should carry any gun loaded or unloaded away from his/her home or place of business unless he or she has the proper authorization or license. *It is important to know that in Massachusetts there is a law which requires a one year mandatory jail sentence for illegally carrying a handgun, rifle or shotgun.*

For more information, contact:

Department of Public Safety
1010 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
(617) 566-4500

PROFESSIONS AND TRADES

Boards of Registration Licenses are required for certain professions and trades in Massachusetts. State licenses are issued by the following Boards of Registration:

Allied Health Professions (Athletic Trainers, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists), Architects, Barbers, Chiropractors, Dental Examiners, Dispensing Opticians, Drinking Water Supply Facility Operators, Electricians, Electrologists, Embalming and Funeral Directors, Engineers and Land Surveyors, Hairdressers, Health Officers, Landscape Architects, Medicine, Nursing, Nursing Home Administrators, Optometry, Pharmacy, Plumbers and Gasfitters, Podiatry, Psychology, Public Accountancy, Radio and Television Technicians, Real Estate Brokers and Salesmen, Sanitarians, Social Workers, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, Veterinary Medicine, and Waste Water Treatment Facility Operators.

For more information, contact:

Boards of Registration
Division of Registration
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02202
(617) 727-3076

Teachers Teachers and other professional education personnel must be certified by the Department of Education.

For more information, contact:

Teacher Certification and Placement Bureau
Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169
(617) 770-7517

Lawyers If you have been practicing in another state for five years or more and have a Massachusetts lawyer to vouch for you, you can be sworn in by the Supreme Judicial Court. If you have been practicing for less than five years, you will have to take the bar examination administered by the Board of Bar Examiners.

For more information, contact:

Board of Bar Examiners
77 Franklin St.
Boston, Massachusetts 02110
(617) 482-4466

Supreme Judicial Court
New Court House
Pemberton Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
(617) 725-8010

Other Occupations In addition to these occupations, many other occupations are licensed by the state or at the local level. Check with Citizen Information Service for further information.

TRANSPORTATION

Highways Massachusetts has 31,300 miles of highways including the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) which stretches the length of the state connecting Massachusetts with upper New York state and roads that lead to Connecticut. Interstate 95, which circles Boston, runs the width of the state from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. Interstate 93 connects Massachusetts with New Hampshire, and Interstate 91 connects western Massachusetts with Vermont and Connecticut.

For an official Massachusetts Transportation Map issued by the Department of Public Works, contact:

Division of Tourism
100 Cambridge Street, 13th floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02202
(617) 727-3201

For a map of the Massachusetts Turnpike, contact:

Massachusetts Turnpike Authority
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 973-7300

Airports Logan International Airport is the largest passenger and air cargo terminal in New England. It is located within the boundaries of Boston.

For information, contact:

Logan International Airport
Massachusetts Port Authority
East Boston, Massachusetts 02128
(617) 567-5400

or the individual airline.

For a listing of the 53 local airports, contact:

Massachusetts Aeronautics Commission
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 973-7350

Trains Boston is part of Amtrak's eastern corridor. Direct service is available to New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.

For information on nationwide Amtrak service, contact:

Toll free: 1-800-872-7245

Buses Massachusetts is serviced by bus companies which operate in large communities out of Greyhound and Trailways Bus Terminals and by local companies in smaller communities. Check your telephone book for your local office or terminal.

Public Transportation The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority operates bus, trolley, trackless trolley, and rapid transit in 79 communities in the Greater Boston area.

For a MBTA map and information, contact:

MBTA
10 Park Plaza
Boston, Massachusetts 02116
(617) 722-3200
(617) 722-5000

In addition, the MBTA runs commuter train service, connecting Boston with various outlying suburbs.

For information, contact:

Boston and Maine (North) 1-800-392-6099
Boston and Maine (South) 1-800- 882-1220

Throughout the rest of the state there are fourteen regional transportation authorities which provide public transportation for specific regions.

For more information, contact:

Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 973-7000

EDUCATION

Public Schools Primary and secondary schools are under the control of cities and towns. The state mandates school attendance for children between ages of 6 and 16 and requires school systems to operate kindergartens, but does not require children to attend them. According to state regulations a child must be enrolled in school (kindergarten or first grade) in the calendar year in which the child turns six.

Private Schools Information on private schools can be obtained from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Sanborn House, 15 High Street, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890 — (617) 729-6762 or from the National Association of Independent Schools, 18 Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 — (617) 723-6900.

Higher Education There are 120 institutions of higher learning, public and private, located in Massachusetts. The state institutions include fifteen two-year community colleges, seven four-year state colleges, and three state universities. In addition, the state college system contains two schools with specialized curricula: Massachusetts Maritime Academy and the Massachusetts College of Art. The state universities are spread across Massachusetts. The University of Massachusetts has a main campus in Amherst, a Boston campus, and a medical school in Worcester. Southeastern Massachusetts University is located in North Dartmouth, and the

University of Lowell in Lowell. To be eligible for the resident tuition rate, the applicant must be able to indicate residency (physical presence) and *twelve* months domicile in Massachusetts with intent to stay prior to the date of entry into the state college or university (six months for community colleges).

HOUSING/JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Massachusetts 351 communities offer housing in a variety of geographical settings. Cost and availability vary according to location. Employment opportunities are found in a wide range of manufacturing and commercial enterprises in such diverse fields as computer science, technological research, textile, and tourist industries. One of the best places to get information on the jobs and housing available in Massachusetts is the classified section of a local newspaper. For the greater Boston area, the most complete classifieds are available in the Sunday editions of *The Boston Globe* or *The Boston Herald-American.*

The Boston Globe
135 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 929-2000

The Boston Herald-American
300 Harrison Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02106
(617) 426-3000

The Massachusetts Division of Employment Security (DES) assists applicants in obtaining permanent jobs. It maintains job matching centers throughout the state for general employment placement. DES

also runs statewide centers for job matching in specialized areas. You must apply in person.

For more information, contact:

Division of Employment Security
Charles F. Hurley Building
Government Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 727-6560

HELPFUL HINTS

Doctors To locate a doctor in your area, contact:

Massachusetts Medical Society
1440 Main Street
Waltham, Massachusetts 02254
(617) 893-4610

You can also call local hospitals and ask for a list of physicians.

To locate a specialist, call any teaching hospital (in Boston, Massachusetts General Hospital, Beth Israel Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Tufts-New England Medical Center) and ask for the appropriate department. They will have references.

Dentists To locate a dentist in your area, contact:

Massachusetts Dental Society
36 Washington Street
Wellesley, Massachusetts 02181
(617) 237-6511

Day Care The Office for Children will provide lists of licensed day care facilities if you call or write:

Office of Children
150 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 727-8900

GENERAL INFORMATION ON MASSACHUSETTS

Official Name:
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

State Capitol:
Boston

Population:
5,737,081 (as of 1980 census)

Population Rank:
11th of 50 states

Area:
8,093 square miles (land and water)

Population Density:
732 persons per square mile (land area)

Communities:
312 towns
39 cities

State Government:
Six constitutional officers elected for four years: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer and Receiver General, Auditor

Legislature:
Official Name: Great and General Court
Two branches with members elected for two years
House of Representatives: 160 members
Senate: 40 members

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For further information contact:

Michael J. Connolly
Massachusetts
Secretary of State

Citizen Information Service
Room 1611
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

(617) 727-7030 (metropolitan Boston)
1-800-392-6090 (toll-free outside the Boston area)